



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
February 28, 1985

Dear Dr. Lederberg:

Thank you for sharing with me your views on Federal funding for the National Institutes of Health. As you indicated, NIH has made dramatic contributions in expanding our knowledge about preventing, detecting, diagnosing and treating disease. My support for the remarkable efforts of NIH-supported scientists was clear throughout my first term and has been reiterated in the budget for 1986 that I recently sent to the Congress. During my Administration, funding for NIH has increased 44 percent. Continued progress in biomedical research will indeed be an important part of the Second American Revolution described in my recent State of the Union Address. Including the \$4.9 billion I have requested for 1986, Federal support for NIH since I took office will exceed \$20 billion.

My 1986 request for NIH reflects a strong commitment to continued, sustainable support for biomedical research to ensure long-term improvements in medical care and the health of the American people. This is a goal we all share. The Federal government will continue to provide an estimated 85 percent of the Nation's expenditures on health research, primarily through NIH.

To ensure that such research will flourish in a stable environment, NIH will continue to support 5,000 new and competing research project grants in both 1985 and 1986. Over 600 of the 1985 grants will also receive funding for three years of support. Some reports have characterized the policy of stability through multi-year funding as proposing a rescission of NIH funds appropriated for FY85. This is obviously not the case. Rather, this policy assures continued progress in basic biomedical research during a time when we must work vigorously to reduce the Federal deficit. Total NIH-supported grants between 1983 and 1986 will exceed 68,000.

In a period when many other Federal programs face needed reforms and terminations, support for NIH research efforts will continue to grow during my Administration. But, as the New York Times recently asked in an editorial, "must the Government always be the source" of research? While the past few years have seen a welcome and dramatic increase in private support for biomedical research, my response is that continued Federal support for a stabilized base of 5,000 new and competing awards is appropriate.

I ask your help in ensuring that this important policy of research stability continues. Loss of such stability would introduce an element of uncertainty that could restrict further advances in biomedical research. We cannot afford to take this chance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ronald Reagan". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Dr. Joshua Lederberg
President
Rockefeller University
1230 York Avenue
New York, New York